

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05
EB-08 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18682

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROG, EGEN, UN, TH
SUBJ: WELLS/PETREE PRE-UNGA CONSULTATIONS: ECONOMIC ISSUES

1. AMBASSADOR WELLS AND USUN POL COUNSELOR PETREE HELD LENGTHY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS OF UPCOMING ISSUES AT UNGA WITH M.L. PHIRAPHONG KASEMSI, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPT AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON AUG 19. AMBASSADOR WELLS EXPLAINED THAT PURPOSE OF THEIR TRIP TO SEVERAL COUNTRIES IN ASIA WAS TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE IN ADVANCE OF UNGA AND EXCHANGE IDEAS ABOUT SOME OF THE ISSUES WHICH ARE LIKELY TO ARISE AT RESUMED SESSION AND 32ND UNGA. AFTER PROVIDING RUN-DOWN OF RECENT EVENTS IN NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE, AMBASSADOR WELLS OUTLINED VARIOUS IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP TO CIEC MEETING, POSSIBLE CHANGES IN ECOSOC MEETING ORIENTATION, POSSIBLE REORGANIZATION OF U.N. SECRETARIAT'S EFFORTS IN ECONOMIC FIELD AND ASKED PHIRAPHONG ABOUT THAI ATTITUDES TOWARDS FUTURE COURSE OF NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE.

2. PHIRAPHONG EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND PARTICULARLY FOR AMBASSADOR WELLS UPDATE ON PAST FEW
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MONTHS' EVENTS IN ECONOMIC FIELD. HE SAID THAILAND HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN CIEC AND WAS FOLLOWING CIEC DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH FELLOW ASEAN MEMBER INDONESIA. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THAILAND WAS NO LONGER A MEMBER OF ECOSOC (MALAYSIA IS PRESENTLY MEMBER). THAILAND DID NOT LIKE BEING LEFT OUT OF FORUMS WHICH AFFECTED ITS VITAL INTERESTS. PEREZ GUERRERO IDEA OF ESTABLISHING AN OVERVIEW BODY OF RESTRICTED MEMBERSHIP DID NOT, THEREFORE, APPEAL TO

THAILAND.

3. PHIRAPHONG SAID THAT HE THOUGHT RESUMED UNGA SESSION BECAUSE OF TIME LIMITATIONS WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE ONLY CURSORY ATTENTION TO CIEC AND OTHER NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES, AND BULK OF WORK WOULD BE HANDLED IN COMMITTEE II. PHIRAPHONG HOPED THAT POLITICAL ISSUES WOULD NOT TAKE UP TOO MUCH OF THE COMMITTEE'S TIME. THAILAND REMAINED OPEN-MINED ABOUT TIMING AND LEVEL OF FUTURE DISCUSSIONS ON NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES, BUT HOPED THAT TOO MANY ORGANIZATIONS IN ECONOMIC FIELD WOULD NOT BE FORMED. (PHIRAPHONG MENTIONED THAT LOS HAD, FOR EXAMPLE, BECOME MUCH TOO CUMBERSOME A BODY.) PHIRAPHONG HAD NO PARTICULAR REACTION TO ECOSOC MEETINGS BEING HELD ON SUBJECT BY SUBJECT BASIS AS LONG AS THAI WERE GUARANTEED SOME FORM OF PARTICIPATION, EVEN AS NON-MEMBER.

4. RE COMMON FUND, PHIRAPHONG SAID HE HOPED COMMON FUND WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN TIME TO BE READY TO OPERATE AS SOON AS AGREEMENTS ON COMMODITIES WERE REACHED. HE NOTED THAT THAILAND WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN RUBBER, TIN, SUGAR, JUTE AND TROPICAL TIMBER NEGOTIATIONS.

5. PHIRAPHONG EXPLAINED THAT THAILAND AS A MIDDLE-INCOME, FOOD EXPORTING COUNTRY WAS "OUT IN THE COLD" AND DID NOT BENEFIT FROM MANY PROGRAMS BEING DEVELOPED IN ECONOMIC AREA. EXCLUDED FROM IDA ASSISTANCE AS TOO WEALTHY, THAILAND WANTED TO SEE HELP FOR POORER COUNTRIES, BUT ALSO DID NOT TAKE TO BEING ELIMINATED FROM
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VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF COUNTRIES WHICH ARE TO BENEFIT FROM IMPROVED CLIMATE BETWEEN DCS AND LDCS. PHIRAPHONG SAID THAT THAILAND DID NOT CONSIDER DEBT RELIEF A MAJOR CONCERN BECAUSE OF THE COUNTRY'S CONSERVATIVE BORROWING POLICY. FUEL CRISIS HAD, HOWEVER, AFFECTED THAILAND'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES, AND IF COMMODITY PRICES DROPPED AND DROUGHT CONTINUED, RTG WOULD FACE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HE NOTED THAT THAILAND'S THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN HAS FAILED TO MEET ITS GOALS, AND THE NEWLY-LAUNCHED FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN STRESSED SOCIAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S DIFFICULTIES IN MEETING BASIC NEEDS.

6. COMMENT: WE FOUND VISIT BY AMBASSADOR WELLS AND MR. PETREE EXTREMELY USEFUL, NOT ONLY IN ESTABLISHING DIALOGUE WITH THAI OFFICIALS BUT ALSO AS MEANS OF INFORMING EMBOFFS OF U.S. EFFORTS AT U.N. IN ADVANCE OF UNGA SESSION. PHIRAPHONG LATER TOLD CHARGE THAT HE FELT DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN MOST WORTHWHILE, AND HE HOPED SUCH VISITS WOULD CONTINUE IN FUTURE. DISCUSSIONS OF POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES ARE BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.
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